

GENERAL SCHEDULE WITHIN-GRADE INCREASES

Description

Each General Schedule (GS) grade has 10 steps. Within-grade increases (WGIs) or step increases are periodic increases in a GS employee's rate of basic pay from one step of the grade of his or her position to the next higher step of that grade.

Earning Within-Grade Increases

Employees earn WGIs upon meeting the following three requirements established by law:

- The employee's performance must be at an acceptable level of competence. To meet this requirement, an employee's most recent performance rating of record must be at least Level 3 ("Fully Successful" or equivalent).
- The employee must have completed the required waiting period for advancement to the next higher step.
- The employee must not have received an "equivalent increase" in pay (other than a scheduled increase in basic GS pay rates) during the waiting period.

Required Waiting Periods

For employees with a scheduled tour of duty, the required waiting periods established by law for advancement to the next higher step are as follows:

- Advancement from step 1 to step 2 - Requires 52 weeks of creditable service at step 1
- Advancement from step 2 to step 3 - Requires 52 weeks of creditable service at step 2
- Advancement from step 3 to step 4 - Requires 52 weeks of creditable service in step 3
- Advancement from step 4 to step 5 - Requires 104 weeks of creditable service in step 4
- Advancement from step 5 to step 6 - Requires 104 weeks of creditable service in step 5
- Advancement from step 6 to step 7 - Requires 104 weeks of creditable service in step 6
- Advancement from step 7 to step 8 - Requires 156 weeks of creditable service in step 7
- Advancement from step 8 to step 9 - Requires 156 weeks of creditable service in step 8
- Advancement from step 9 to step 10 - Requires 156 weeks of creditable service in step 9